

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /093 W

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R 250809Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6497

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT LA

SUBJECT: LAO DIPLOMATS PROCLAIM CONVERSION

SUMMARY: THE LAO FOREIGN MINISTRY IS CONDUCTING A "SEMINAR" FOR ITS FEW CHIEFS OF MISSION WHO HAVE NOT BEEN REPLACED OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO, AND FOR ASSORTED OTHER UNRECONSTRUCTED DIPLOMATS. (SOME CHOSE TO RESIGN THAN ATTEND.) AFTER THEIR FIRST THREE WEEKS OF STUDY, SEVERAL OF THE DIPLOMATS MADE FULSOME COMMENTS FOR PULICATION BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. STILL AHEAD OF THEM IS A POSSIBLY RIGOROUS "FIELD TRIP" UP-COUNTRY. WHETHER OR WHEN THEY WILL RETURN TO THEIR POSTS IS NOT YET CLEAR AND MAY WELL DEPEND ON THE AMOUNT OF ENTHUSIASM THEY SHOW FOR THE NEW REGIME. END SUMMARY.

1. A GROUP OF LAO DIPLOMATS ASSIGNED ABROAD ARE

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CURRENTLY IN LAOS PARTICIPATING IN A POLITICAL "SEMINAR"

THAT BEGAN EARLY IN MAY. THE MAY 22 ISSUE OF THE INFORMATION MINISTRY'S DAILY BULLETIN REPORTED THEIR ENTHUSIASTIC COMMENTS ON THEIR STUDIES AND ON THE NEW LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. WHETHER OR WHEN THEY WILL RETURN TO THEIR POSTS IS STILL UNCLEAR AND MAY DEPEND UPON AN EVALUATION OF THE THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES THEY DISPLAY.

2. THE BULLETIN QUOTED SOUK OUPRAVANE, AMBASSADOR TO INDIA, AS "FRANKLY" STATING TO A REPORTER FROM THE PARTY ORGAN "SIENG PASASON": "AFTER MY TRAINING, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MY PRESENT THINKING AND THAT WHICH I PREVIOUSLY HAD, WHEN I WAS IN NEW DELHI, IS AS BIG AS THAT BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH. ALL MY SUSPICIONS HAVE DISAPPEARED."

3. AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE KEO VIPHAKONE SAID: "THE NEW LINE PUT FORWARD BY THE PARTY IS A TRUE POLICY OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. EVEN THOUGH I HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE TRAINING COURSE FOR ONLY TWO OR THREE WEEKS, I PERCEIVE A RADIANT FUTURE FOR OUR COUNTRY UNDER THE CLEAR-SIGHTED DIRECTION OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. I REPENT MY FORMER INCORRECT VIEWS REGARDING THE REVOLUTION."

4. VITHAGNA SOURINHO, LAOS' UN REPRESENTATIVE, "SPOKE WITH AN OPEN HEART, FULL OF EMOTION": "I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THIS POLITICAL EDUCATION COURSE AND I WILL NO LONGER BE FOOLED BY THE REACTIONARIES AND FOREIGNERS WHO TOLD ME BEFORE MY RETURN TO THIS COUNTRY THAT THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO RETURN TO LAOS WILL BE SENT TO VIENG SAY WITHOUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF RETURNING. EVEN MORE SERIOUS, THEY CLAIMED AT THE TOPE OF THEIR LUNGS THAT THE NEW REGIME NO LONGER HAD ANY USE FOR LONG TIME OFFICIALS AND THAT THEY MIGHT BE EXECUTED. AT FIRST I HAD HESITATIONS. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO VERIFY THE TRUTH WITH MY OWN EYES, I DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE COUNTRY TO SEE THE LIGHT OF THE PARTY. WHEN THEY REALIZE THAT THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT ARE FILLED WITH FORBEARANCE, I AM PERSUADED THAT THE LAO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN LURED AWAY BY THE ENEMY WILL RETURN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THEIR COUNTRY IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE."

5. THE INFORMATION MINISTRY'S BULLETIN REPORTED THAT ALL THE DIPLOMATS "SWORE ALWAYS TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE PARTY AND THE NATION AND TO USE ALL THEIR CAPABILITIES AND INTELLIGENCE IN THE EFFORT OF BUILDING A PROSPEROUS FATHERLAND".

6. AN OFFICIAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TOLD AN EMBOFF ON MAY 24 THAT THE "SEMINAR" PARTICIPANTS HAD ONE MORE WEEK OF STUDIES TO DO IN VIENTIANE. THEY WOULD THEN TAKE A "FIELD TRIP" EITHER TO VIENG SAY OR TO XIENG KHOUANG. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG THE TRIP WOULD LAST-- "PERHAPS A FEW WEEKS"--OR WHEN THE DIPLOMATS WOULD RETURN TO THEIR POSTS.

7. COMMENT: IT MAY BE TRUE THAT RECENT CONVERTS ARE THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC, BUT ONE SUSPECTS THAT SOME OF THE GUSHING COMMENTS NOTED ABOVE WERE INSPIRED BY A DESIRE TO MAKE THE "FIELD TRIP" AS SHORT AS POSSIBLE AND "ALLER-RETOUR".

8. NOT ALL THE DIPLOMATS WHO WERE INSTRUCTED TO RETURN HOME FOR THIS SEMINAR CHOSE TO COMPLY. THE LAO CHARGE IN WASHINGTON, KHAMSOUK CHANTHADARA, WAS ONE WHO DID NOT. HE RESIGNED HIS POSITION (AND WILL REMAIN IN THE U.S. IN REFUGEE STATUS). HIS FORMER SUBORDINATE, FIRST SECRETARY SOMPHONG VANITSAVETH, IS NOW THE LAO CHARGE (VIENTIANE 1178 (NOTAL). SIMILARLY, MISS SOMMALA NORINDR, FIRST SECRETARY OF EMBASSY IN BANGKOK AND DAUGHTER OF FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE RLG AND PGNU PHENG NORINDR, RESIGNED SO AS NOT TO HAVE TO RETURN AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS SEMINAR (BANGKOK 13437, NOTAL).
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